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FURTHER NOTES ON ST 439 (= *P. LOND.* V 1720v)

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Further Notes on ST 439 (= *P. Lond.* V 1720v; see Pl. VI 1)¹

Upon being invited to participate in a session on Byzantine Egypt forming part of an Oriental Institute (Chicago) conference entitled "Life in a Multicultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and Beyond", and being asked to make a presentation on the history of Christianity at Syene, I found myself more and more occupied with the Coptic-language documentation from that city, over and above Greek documents such as the Patermouthis archive. Through the kindness of Professor J. Joel Farber I have been supplied with a photograph of the Coptic text on the ↑ side of *P. Lond.* V 1720 (B.L. inv. 1793), first published in 1913 by H.R. Hall as part of H.I. Bell's article, "Syene papyri in the British Museum," *Klio* 13 (1913) 173-174. The text was republished with many improvements in 1921 by Crum as ST 439.² Thanks to this photograph and the progress that has been made in Coptic documen-

¹ I should like to thank J. Joel Farber, Bezalel Porten, Terry Wilfong, and, as always, Mirrit Boutros Ghali (cf. BKU I 32, stanza 83, line 2). The photograph of *P. Lond.* 1720↑ is printed here courtesy of the British Library.

² This text was not included in W. Till, *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben übersetzt* (Vienna 1964), although it is from eastern Thebes.

tary papyrology in the intervening seventy years, a couple of additions and improvements to Crum's (and *a fortiori* Hall's) texts appear possible.

The date of the text on the other side (→), the sale to the pledge-holder of an earring that had been left as collateral on a loan, is 3.ii.A.D. 549 (p.c. Basilius, Mecheir 9, induction 12). As to the question of which text came first, → or ↑, the answer may reverse our usual expectations. The three papyri *P. Lond. V* 1719-1721 inclusive form a group dealing with people from the area of Thebes (Kastron Kerameos in the east, and probably Kastron Memnonion [Jeme] in the west); yet the documents were supposed to have been found actually at Syene/Elephantine, as fully explained by Bell in *P. Lond. V* pp. 165-166. In 1719.5-6 we find a person from Kastron [Memnon]ion described as a resident in Syene:³ as stated by Farber and Porten in their draft notes for the re-edition of the Patermouthis archive,⁴ this situation would explain why three documents acknowledging debts would have remained in the hands of a creditor, a man who had come from Thebes to become resident in Syene, to end up later and be found in the latter place. This would point to the Coptic text on the ↑ side of 1720, a list of objects pledged without interest (ΑΤΜΗϹΕ) mentioning Petemout (Medamoud, near Luxor/eastern Thebes; see below), having been written first, in the Theban area. The papyrus would subsequently have been brought to Syene and its → side used to write the contract involving the earring. Coptic-language texts often seem to prefer the ↑ side of a papyrus. Enough space remains in the right margin of the text on the ↑ side to allow for what was written as the docket of 1720r, the abbreviation-sign of which (in γεναμ̄^ξ) appears to go down touching the last letter of line 11 of the Coptic text. Alternatively, the Coptic text might post-date the Greek text on the → side, if Paulos the debtor in 1719 (see below) had kept all three documents together and used a side of one of them to list, in Coptic, articles that had been left (deposited) back in the Theban area. Bilingualism in Egyptian society of this period was pervasive enough to allow for such a switching back and forth of languages depending on the preferences of parties to contracts. However, the first scenario seems more likely. It is difficult to estimate how much time may have elapsed, either way, between the writing of the two texts.

The Coptic hand on the ↑ side, inclined slightly to the right, angular and without ligatures, has affinities to that of Ep 269. At least in the absence of further evidence, and given its being written on the other side of a text absolutely dated to the mid-sixth century, we can assume the Coptic text to be pre-conquest; and the Epiphanius material, being from the Theban area and partly sixth-century, forms a useful point of reference (cf. below).⁵ The surface of

³ In an article entitled "φιλοτιμία in Byzantine papyri", *Tyche* 5 (1990) 63-66, I also raise the possibility that Jlios son of Psas[in *P. Lond. V* 1719.5 was a person originating from Syene living in Kastron [Memnon]ion (the later Jeme, Thebes/Hermontite).

⁴ I am grateful for advance copies of this material from the authors.

⁵ There are not many securely dated comparanda for Coptic documentary hands of the sixth century. The largest body of material we have are the Coptic papyri from Aphrodito in the Vatican Library, and their relatives the Coptic papyri from the archives of Dioscorus of Aphrodito.

the papyrus on its ↑ side appears abraded and damaged at the vertical foldlines; a hole interrupts the lower center.

As to chronology, 1720, as stated, is securely dated to 3.II.549. No. 1719, dated to a fourth induction, could be 541 or 556; 1721, a sixth induction, could be 542/3 or 557/8. Thus the order could be 1719, 1721, 1720, all within the same decade, or else 1720, 1719, 1721. Paulos in 1719.4 might be the same person as the Paulos father of Aur. Maria in 1720.6-7.⁶ This might make the earlier dating sequence more likely.

I reproduce Crum's 1921 text with slight revisions and translation (plate VI 1).

† πλογος ἀλιθοιп [. .]		† The account of what was left in deposit (at)
πετεμοут: соуы		Petemout: six
ῆσολοк/ νεζ[вн]оуе ле		solidi (worth). And the things that
ετογи: наине[:]	4	were deposited/pledged are these:
φомте ῆπод[ε ῆ]φоп' ῆгат:		three pieces, silver vessels;
снау ῆкі ῆсомнт:		two copper vessels;
օγλаканн варват: еренаї		one bronze basin, these
օүнг շаңнօյբ соуы +[.]	8	being deposited/pledged for six gold pieces.
+ нетоғи: ле [ῆ]атмисе етє		+ And they are deposited/pledged without interest, which
օүголок/ ῆписе ῆкератсе:		(would be) a solidus and six keratia.
нейш не наи: оү[н]ици ῆсия		These are the deposited/pledged things: a wash-basin for
ас: оүарн [ῆ]сомнт:	12	washing hands; an <i>arē</i> of copper;
օүкі ῆсомнт [ү]иим.		a small copper vessel;
օүкнхой оүкерапти:		an oil vessel; a candelabra;
օүкокогма моу:		a cauldron for water

Notes on the text:

1: Crum reads either αλιθοι or χωτοс, either of which would be from ωτο or ςτο, "to lay down, deposit".

2: Petemout, identified by Crum in ST (1921), p. 128 and Ep I (1926), p. 107 (cf. esp. Ep 278.21n) with the modern Medamoud (Madamūd), on the east bank of the Nile across from Thebes, northeast of Luxor: see S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten 4* (Wiesbaden 1988) 1503-1505. Timm collects a sizable dossier of late antique Coptic texts giving evidence of the history of Christianity in this town (their being exclusively in Coptic explains why this site is not covered in Calderini's *Dizionario*). Two churches are known from excavations at the site: one in the south court of the temple of Mut, and one in the Ptolemaic *dromos* (Timm 4.1505 with nn. 2-3, citing *FIAO* 3 and 7 [Cairo 1926-1933; the former reference should be to pp. 16-25]). Timm (4.1505 n. 1) also identifies Petemout with Kastron Kerameos (as in the text on the front of our papyrus, *P. Lond.* V 1720.5), based on A. Bataille's data in *Chron. d'Eg.* 21 (1946) 237-244. This would give a further identity of place for the two texts on each side of this papyrus: Aur. Nonna in the Greek text is described as

⁶ In 1719.4 Farber and Porten suggest restoring Kerameos as the name of the *kastron*; the same might even possibly be restored in line 6 as well, instead of Bell's doubtful [Memnon]ion. We know that Petemout, identified with Kastron Kerameos by Bataille and Timm (see note on line 2 of text), both had a "holy church" (as in 1719.3) and belonged to the Hermontite nome (OMH 177.2-3), as in 1719.6.

coming from Kastron Kerameos of the Theban nome, and the metal objects listed in the Coptic text were deposited (pledged) in Petemout. This might provide another possible scenario giving priority in time to the Coptic text: Nonna or a member of her family first left some articles in pledge back in the Theban area, and then, moving to Syene, incurred a further indebtedness by pledging her earring to Maria/Paulos. For the most part, however, Jemeites/Thebans seem to have been creditors, hence better off than the Petemoutians, their debtors, as Dr. T. Wilfong has pointed out to me (*per litt.*).

³: Crum reads ΗΕΩ[ΒΗ]ΟΥΕ, but the text on the surface is not completely gone, and ΗΕΩΒΗΟΥΕ is just visible, although the eta looks like an omicron.

4 ογκω: Note the different verb, a technical financial term corresponding to ὑποθήκη.

5 ποσ[ε]: "piece(s)", here not meaning actual fragments of a formerly whole object but used as a listing term as in Crum's lemma (*Dict.* 286a) giving Ryl 213 and 243 that enumerate pieces of clothing. "Piece" is used as in commercial English (or old-fashioned pidgin) to mean "item(s)".

9 φωτι: "receptacle". ΑΤΤΙΚΟΣ: Crum (*Dict.* 186a) cites CO Ad. 17 to show that when the six solidi are repaid the deposited objects are to be given back without claiming the interest which would have amounted to the high rate of 18%, triple the Justinianic norm. Perhaps the creditor is trying not to fall afoul of imperial law here, by agreeing not to claim such a high rate.

11: $\epsilon\gamma\omega$, with $\sigma\gamma\omega\varphi$ (cf. lines 4, 8), is the technical term for "to deposit an item as collateral, to pledge or pawn" (*Crum Dictionary* 62b).

¹¹ Ηγετικόν: the actual article, not the rite of washing; cf. ST 116.17.

12 αρῆ: A hole interrupts the surface of the papyrus after the eta, and one thinks of αρῆ[β, "pledge, deposit" in this context, but "a pledged thing of copper" is redundant. In Ep 543.8, a list of utensils, we find "five αροῦ". For the name of this vessel Crum in his note *ad loc.* compares Ryl 211.4, Hermopolite, mentioning "your balance-scale with its leaden αρό". However, in the text under discussion here, Crum's rho just might be read as a gamma; and, given the frequent interchange of ρ/κ/ϲ in Coptic, we may also compare Crum's lemma in *Dict.* 26b for ασοη, ασαη, "a metal vessel", citing Ostr. Berol. inv. 2222 line 6, ογαδ(ο)η ηζοηητ, "a copper vessel", as published by L. Stern, "Sahidische Inschriften," ZÄS 16 (1878) 17 (also a list of utensils). We might read αγηηη, comparing WS 140's ακηηη: also "a copper vessel".

14 κογηκού: a vessel for oil, known from Ep 545.10, 548.11; cf. Kasser-Vycichl, *Dict.étymol.* 84a. This word can also be restored in WS 146.3 (for ογκονοὶ ήογκονοῖογ; "an oil-vessel of white bronze", not "a basket of white beans").

κεραπτής: also γεραπτός: there are many forms in Coptic, e.g. in Ep 548.12 and esp. 544.5n. Cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67340.77, κηριαπτάρι(ο)ν. The meaning is "candelabra".

15 κο(γ)κούμα(γ): *cucuma*, "cauldron", as in Ep 549.3, ST 116.16; Crum *Dict.* 102a; Kasser-Vycichl, *Dict. etymol.* 75a. In the text of Ep 549 Crum thought, in his note 1 on line 3, that the forms ending in -μοοΥ were plural; I prefer (Ϊ)μοοΥ, "(for) water".

The document deals with a single transaction, that recording the deposit ($\psi/\times\tau\circ$, ογω γ) of half a dozen metal objects with a creditor in Petemout, with six gold solidi being advanced to the debtor on their collateral (the debtor having likely subsequently relocated from the Theban area to Syene). Although line 9 begins with another cross, this does not describe a second transaction: the clue is in the verb in lines 7-8, which is in the circumstantial and so must continue to describe the same event. Possibly the scribe started a second, more descriptive list, after the actual objects were brought before him and taken as deposit. Hence he started again with a cross and another verb in the qualitative ("stative", A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Chrestomathy* [Leuven 1988] 274), with relative prefix, which also continues to describe the same event. He is now enumerating, for the sake of clarity, what the

items are by type, not just by what metal they are composed of: the copper vessels of line 6 are the *ἀρή* (or *ἀρη[ν]*) and the small vessel of lines 12 and 13; the bronze basin (line 7, *λακανή*) is the *[ν]ητίς* for hand-washing; and the three pieces, silver vessels of line 5 are the oil vessel (*ῥῖχογ*), the candelabra (*κεραπτής*), and the cauldron for water (*κοκούμα*) of lines 14-15.

Were these ordinary household vessels or possibly ecclesiastical? The former seems more likely. In *P. Lond.* V 1720 (the Greek), both parties, creditor and debtor, are women, and the pawned object is an earring. Here too we are dealing probably with objects from a comparatively well-to-do household, one that has silver oil flasks and *trullaē* for the table, and silver candelabra for lighting.

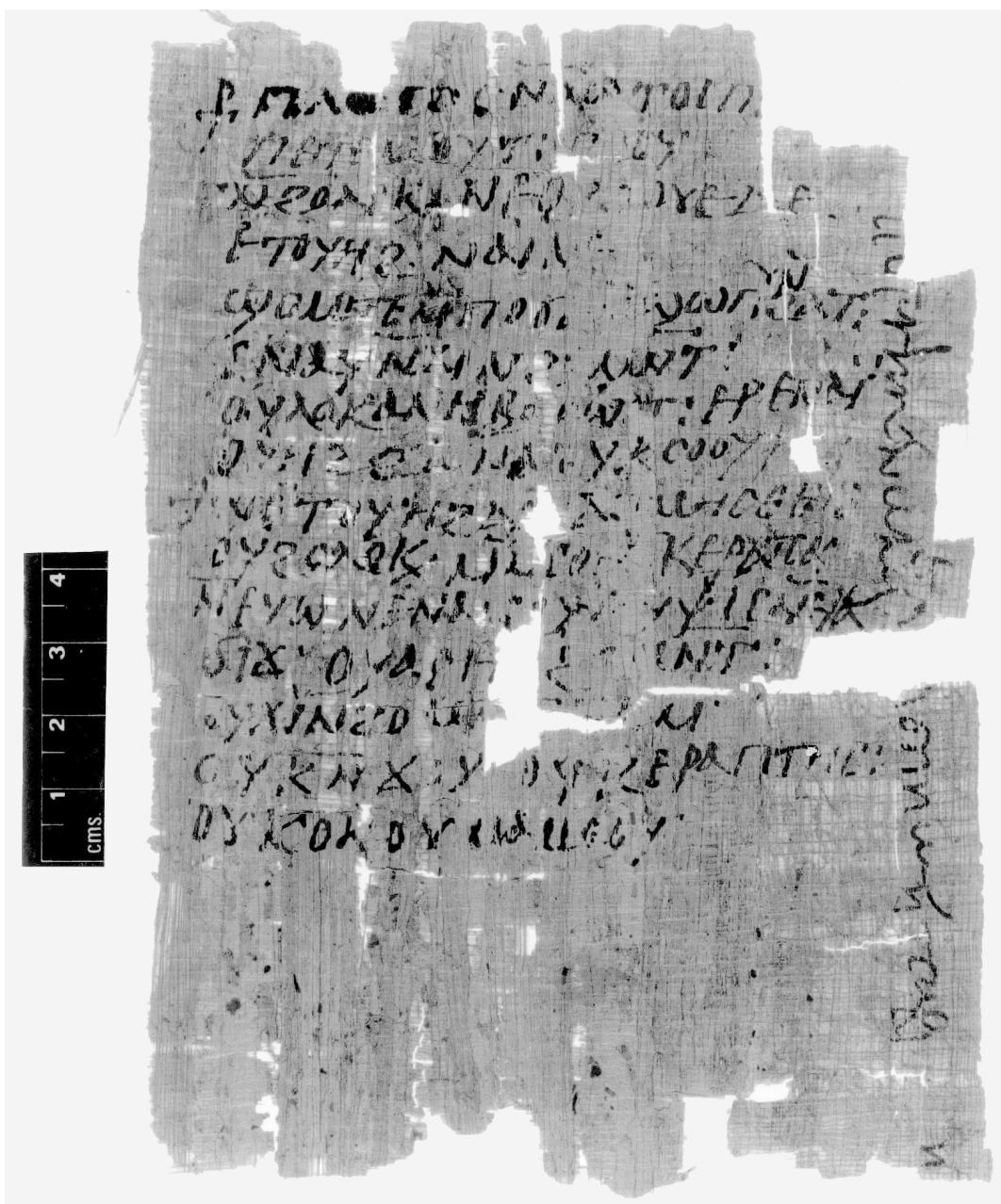
The loan is stipulated as being without interest, if the six solidi are paid back, presumably within time limits not mentioned in the present document (see on line 9).

It is obvious that these lists of metal pots and pans, whatever their date, provide much overlapping data. What we have on the vertical-fibres side of the London papyrus is a valuable addition to our dossier of Coptic documentary texts from the sixth century, thanks to the secure date of the Greek text on its other side. We can see that the usual economic activities of pawning, borrowing and lending were going on in the area of Thebes in the Christian period two hundred years before the Jeme documents testify to the same thing in the eighth century.⁷

Dumbarton Oaks

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⁷ Cf. T. Wilfong, "The Archive of a Family of Moneylenders from Jeme," *BASP* 27 (1990) 169-181.



ST 439 (= P. Lond. V 1720, back)